



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL  
GOVERNOR

PEGGY M. HATCH  
SECRETARY

**For Immediate Release**  
Dec. 7, 2010

**Contact:** Tim Beckstrom  
**Phone:** 225-219-3967

### **EPA commends DEQ for successful review of Coulee Baton Micro Watershed Sewer Project**

**BATON ROUGE** – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, recently commended Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's Nonpoint Source Program for their efforts on the Coulee Baton Micro Watershed Rural Sewer System Improvement Project.

Beginning in 2008, DEQ initiated a project in Vermilion Parish to provide cost share assistance and educational resources to citizens for the repair or replacement of failing septic systems. The project, known as the Coulee Baton Micro Watershed Rural Sewer System Improvement Project, was undertaken with the goal of improving a large number of failing residential septic systems, as faulty septic systems can negatively impact human health and the environment. The project was funded through a nonpoint source grant from EPA in the amount of \$310,319.50, which covered approximately 68 percent of the costs for the project. A match totaling \$58,500.31 was provided from homeowner contributions, in-kind services and volunteers.

The project was developed in response to a larger micro watershed management strategy focusing on the Gulf of Mexico's Hypoxic Zone. Since it receives no drainage input from upstream sources, the Coulee Baton Micro Watershed was an ideal watershed in which to study and improve. During the study, failing home septic systems within the micro watershed were found to be a major contributor to nonpoint source pollution in its waterways. An assessment revealed that approximately 70 percent of local residences were discharging undertreated sewerage into those waterways. The Coulee Baton Micro Watershed Rural Sewer Improvement Project was designed to minimize that contribution.

A major component of the project was to provide outreach to the homeowners regarding the composition and maintenance of their septic systems. Three effluent reduction systems were demonstrated and homeowner education was accomplished through field day demonstrations, instructional presentations and town hall meetings. Improving water quality was addressed through the cost share program to replace aged and failing septic systems. By the project end date, septic systems for 80 homes, or 70 percent of the project goal, were replaced.

EPA recently approved the final technical report presented by DEQ's Business Community Outreach and Incentives Division on the Coulee Baton project; indicating that it was successful and met DEQ's grant commitment. EPA also commended DEQ's partnership with the Acadiana Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"This commendation by the EPA is a testament to the hard work undertaken by DEQ's Business Community Outreach and Nonpoint Source Program teams in their absolute dedication to upgrade many of the failing sewage and wastewater treatment systems throughout the state," said Alex Appeaning, DEQ Deputy Secretary. "The Coulee Baton Micro Watershed project exemplifies our commitment to make major inroads in municipal sewage repairs while continuing to build solid working relationships with the citizens of Louisiana as well as our local, state and federal partners. Simply put, municipal sewer improvements are good for the environment and for economic development."